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Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee's public hearing on
S.B. No. 1011 - An Act Concerning a Reorganization of Connecticut's System of Public
Higher Education.

I first applied for a job at Eastern Connecticut State University, and was fortunate enough to be hired there, as a direct result of their unique mission as the state's only small, public liberal-arts institution. This was the kind of place where I wanted to be. I believe quite fervently that the best way to educate effective citizens of a democratic society is to give them the broad foundation of a liberal-arts education, preferably with the depth of study and richness of engagement that is only possible when relatively small classes receive the full attention of world-class professors. In America, this kind of education is largely the province of elite private institutions, priced well beyond the financial resources of most of the public. The state of Connecticut took a bold step in creating such an institution, and placing the education we provide within easy financial reach of our students. We are an unusual school--there is a national organization of similar institutions, the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC), and it only has 26 member institutions. Connecticut is, in other words, a member of a small club, made up of states that have made a commitment to provide their citizens with this sort of education without the Ivy League price tag, and this is something precious, to be preserved against all threats. I am not opposed in principle to the idea of restructuring higher education in Connecticut, but I respectfully ask that this body recognize during their

deliberations on this topic that our mission is fundamentally different from that of Connecticut's community colleges. Many CSU faculty and students worry that combining the governance of the CSU schools with that of the community colleges, whose important mission differs so much from that of the universities, might have the effect of somehow diluting or altering the unique purpose that attracts so many students to our programs in the first place.